

Ribbon-Cutting for the Hale-Wilkinson-Carter Home

□

August 17, 2010

□

Hillsville, Virginia

□

I am pleased to return to Hillsville today to mark the completion of a large portion of the renovation of the Hale-Wilkinson-Carter home here in Downtown Hillsville. The home represents a significant part of the downtown revitalization effort underway in Hillsville and provides space for local art shows, artisan sales, traditional music and a meeting place for community gatherings.

In 2005, I worked with officials from the Town of Hillsville and Town residents to initiate a downtown revitalization effort which would spur economic activity in Hillsville's downtown and provide new and greater opportunities for the development of locally owned small businesses. The downtown revitalization effort was aided by a federal grant I secured from the Appalachian Regional Commission of \$250,000 for the restoration of some of the historic exteriors of downtown buildings.

As part of the downtown revitalization effort, Congress approved my request for a federal appropriation of \$200,000 for the restoration of the historic home of George L. Carter on Main Street to provide a new resource and welcome boost for the Town's tourism economy.

My goal in requesting this funding was for the Hale-Wilkinson-Carter Home, which was given to the county in 1957 after the passing of Mayetta Carter, to become a center for economic activity in the Town, providing space for local artists and craftsmen to display and sell their work. In addition, the Carter home would provide much needed additional meeting space for events, musical performances, receptions and community meetings right here in downtown Hillsville. At the same time, the restoration of the home would preserve this outstanding historic resource for future generations of Hillsville residents to enjoy.

After many months of effort by Carroll County and Hale-Wilkinson-Carter home officials, this work has borne fruit, and a major portion of the renovation of the Carter home is now complete.

With the benefit of the federal funds, much of the restoration of the 5-story Carter home, which is 12,000 square feet in size, has been completed. The Carter home was used for County office buildings for approximately 40 years after its donation to the County. As part of the restoration, the temporary walls that created County offices have been removed, and the electrical wiring has been completely replaced. The chimney has been restored, and the roof has been replaced. In addition, the windows, woodwork, ceilings, floors and walls have all been repaired. The wood floors on the second and third stories of the home have been finished, and the plumbing throughout the building has been repaired.

In April, the County officially gave the home to the Hale-Wilkinson-Carter Foundation, and the Foundation is now operating the facility and has plans for plays featuring the region's history, historical tours and other educational activities. The building will also provide meeting spaces as well as space for local artists and craftsmen to display and sell their work. In addition, space has been created on the building's first floor to accommodate tourism related businesses.

While much of the restoration has been completed, there is still work that the Foundation is seeking to complete including finishing the floors on the fourth and fifth floors, addressing leaks, repairing the elevator and handicap ramp, and replacing or repairing the porch ceilings and tiles.

The total cost of the restoration is nearly \$600,000. In addition to the \$200,000 federal appropriation, Carroll County provided \$7,500, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources has provided \$50,000, and the Foundation has provided \$20,000. The remaining future work is estimated to cost approximately \$300,000, and I will continue to work with the Foundation to secure the funds necessary to complete the renovation.

I am pleased at the great progress that has been made in restoring the Hale-Wilkinson-Carter Home. The new facility represents a critical part of downtown Hillsville's culture and history, and our work will ensure it is preserved for future generations while also providing a boost to the Town's tourism economy.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank a number of individuals who have been instrumental in the success we celebrate today.

I would like to thank Evelyn Botschen, who created the Hale-Wilkinson-Carter home foundation and has spearheaded much of the effort to preserve the home. I have enjoyed working with Evelyn on this project, and it is due in large part to her work that the home is preserved today.

Elizabeth Huff, the Foundation's president, and the other members of the Foundation also deserve our thanks for their dedicated efforts to preserve the home.

I also want to thank Dallas Garrett and Kem Garrett for their work on the project.

The Hillsville Town Council also deserves our thanks today for their support of the restoration, and I want to thank Hillsville Mayor Bill Tate, who is with us today.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources also deserves our recognition today for their support of the Carter Home restoration.

The Carroll County Board of Supervisors also deserves our thanks today for their donation of the home to the Foundation and for their longstanding support of the restoration project. The Board's Vice Chair Tom Littrell is with us today, and I want to extend my thanks to him for his work on the project.

Finally, I want to thank my Director of Community Development, Derek Lyall, for his persistent and persuasive efforts on behalf of the Carter home restoration.

The success we mark today represents what can be accomplished when citizens and government officials on the local, state and federal levels work together in aid of a common purpose. For that cooperation and successful work, I want to thank all here and offer special congratulations to the Carter Home Foundation.